



WISEWOMAN

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**Success Story 6** ¡Vida Saludable, Corazón Contento!

*Promoting Healthy Living and a Happy Heart  
Among Latina Women*

**Location** Chapel Hill, North Carolina

**Focus** Help Latina women make healthy changes in their diet and become more physically active.

**Strategy** WISEWOMAN staff at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill developed culturally appropriate, Spanish-language materials to help Latina women make dietary and physical activity changes that will reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke.

**Levels of Success** This successful strategy can serve as a model for others wanting to develop culturally appropriate materials. Rigorous reviews by bilingual health professionals and Latina women were essential to ensuring that these materials would be culturally sensitive.

**Results** These culturally targeted materials have the potential to reach many Latina women across the country. They are being pilot-tested in North Carolina and other states that need help reaching Latina women at risk for heart disease and stroke.

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# ¡Vida Saludable, Corazón Contento!

## *Promoting Healthy Living and a Happy Heart Among Latina Women*

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Greater numbers of Latina women began to seek cardiovascular disease health services through the North Carolina WISEWOMAN Project. Staff members recognized the need to use culturally relevant Spanish-language materials, yet few were available. To address this need, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention adapted the WISEWOMAN lifestyle intervention *A New Leaf...Choices for Healthy Living* for Latina women. The cultural adaptation and translation of *A New Leaf* materials into Spanish was funded through a CDC special interest project and took almost 18 months to complete.

WISEWOMAN staff members began by doing research to learn about the eating and physical activity behaviors of North Carolina's Latina women and find out what these women knew about cardiovascular disease. After reviewing the literature and existing Spanish-language health promotion materials, staff members gained insight into the Latina culture, health habits, and the need for adapted materials. A bicultural public health educator conducted three focus groups with older, low-income Latina women to discuss their cultural practices and their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to diet, physical activity, and cardiovascular disease.

The focus group's feedback guided the creation of a 75-page Spanish-language lifestyle assessment and counseling manual that aims to help Latina women reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease. Here are some of the ways that the original *A New Leaf* materials were adapted:

- Focus groups chose the title, *¡Vida Saludable, Corazón Contento!* (*Healthy Living, Happy Heart*), because it was more relevant to Latina women than the concept of "turning over a new leaf."
- Dietary assessment and health tips include foods common in the Latino community. For example, health tips encourage eating beans seasoned without lard.
- The dietary risk assessment tool is user-friendly for Latina women and can be easily used by health counselors with minimal Spanish-language skills.
- Physical activities reflect Latinos' daily and leisure time activities and sports, including soccer and dancing.

- A cookbook was developed that includes 78 culturally appropriate, heart-healthy recipes.
- A glossary lists common Latino food terms in multiple Spanish dialects.
- Culturally relevant graphics are used.

After the Spanish-language manual was developed, the materials were reviewed for cultural relevance, suitability of graphics and content, readability, and grammar. The materials were first tested by three focus groups of lay Latina women in North Carolina who immigrated and have lived in the United States for varying lengths of time. Next, Arizona WISEWOMAN partners reviewed the Spanish cookbook with their Hispanic program participants. Finally, bicultural public health professionals at federal, state, and local levels reviewed the materials. *¡Vida Saludable, Corazón Contento!* is currently being pilot-tested in North Carolina health departments and will also be tested by the California WISEWOMAN project.

### **Importance of Success**

*¡Vida Saludable, Corazón Contento!* is a Spanish-language lifestyle assessment and counseling manual designed to

guide Latina women as they make changes in their dietary and physical activity behaviors in order to reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

New partnerships were formed with WISEWOMAN states to adapt the *New Leaf* manual to meet the cultural needs of their populations. Other public health agencies across the country are recognizing the need for culturally adapted materials and requesting WISEWOMAN's assistance with the tailoring process.

### **Lessons Learned**

- When developing culturally tailored health education materials for Latina women, allow adequate time to collaborate with and get input from bicultural health professionals and the women served.
- Recognize that evaluation and revision of materials at multiple levels are essential for developing culturally sensitive materials.

